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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/PASCUAL

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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: WEST BANK SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY CONTINUES

REF: 08 JERUSALEM 689

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. New settlement activity in December and January included 184 new housing units in Etz Efraim, augmented infrastructure in some outposts, and progress on previously halted construction in Karmel. End summary.

Etz Efraim Breaking Ground for 184 New Units

¶2. (C) Yesh Din Legal Advocacy Project coordinator Dror Etkes told Poloff January 16 that the northern West Bank settlement of Etz Efraim has begun construction of 184 new housing units. Elkana settler Mel Borenstein confirmed to PolOff January 16 that construction is proceeding rapidly. He said Etz Efraim currently has 150 residential buildings, with virtually no vacancies. YESHA Council contacts have previously said that Etz Efraim's proximity to Tel Aviv (a 20-minute commute) means new units in this area will "sell like hotcakes."

HaYovel Outpost Deepening its Roots

¶3. (C) Etkes described new construction at HaYovel outpost, southeast of Eli settlement. He said bulldozers are digging electrical transmission lines and sewage channels to connect the outpost to Eli's electricity grid and sewage system. According to Etkes, construction began December 27. PA security contacts told Polspec January 15 that settlers blocked the main entrance to the Palestinian village of Qaryut on January 14 to lay a "road" on a nearby hill, next to HaYovel outpost. Shilo settler Yisrael Medad told PolOff January 18 that a new optical cable is being laid there to connect Ha Yovel to Eli and Shilo. Peace Now activist Hagit Ofra told Poloff on January 22 that she had observed a new patrol road connecting Eli and HaYovel to the main highway on January 21.

Susiya Expanding

¶4. (C) NGO Peace Now activist Simcha Leventhal told Poloff January 21 that a new concrete building foundation was recently laid in Susiya settlement's Givat HaDegel ("Flag Hill") outpost. This building will be the outpost's first permanent structure. (Note: This outpost, also known as "Susiya's tent," is located 700 meters from the built-up area of Susiya, and was established in January 2006, and currently has no permanent residents. End Note.) Leventhal had photographs of new wire mesh fences around trees on Susiya's northwest. He said the trees are in Susiya's "special security zone," and Israeli security patrols have expanded their footprint to encompass them. (Note: Photos at "Political Reporting Attachments" on Jerusalem's classified website www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/jerusalem/index.cfm. End

Note.)

Additions to Yattir, Ma'on, and Karmel

15. (C) Levental said two new caravans have been added to the northern side of Yattir settlement in the past month, far a total of six new caravans over the past several months. He said he had observed at least two new greenhouses at Ma'on settlement, adding, "there could be more, but activists are afraid to get too close to the violent settlers in Ma'on." Levental also said construction on a large concrete building at Karmel settlement, which had halted for several months, has rapidly progressed recently. He said he believes the new building will be a new yeshiva, because of its architecture.

WALLES